

openness in our country. And I will, I hope, do something to make Government trustworthy in the eyes of the American people in the days and weeks, months, and years to come. That's a pretty good place to start.

Thank you very much. All right.

[At this point, the President signed Executive Order 13489, *Presidential Records*; Executive Order 13490, *Ethics Commitments by Executive Branch Personnel*; and memoranda on the *Freedom of Information Act*, a *pay freeze for senior White House staff*, and *transparency and open Government*.]

Thank you. Lisa, our schedule now? The swearing-in is going to be taking place, and the Vice President is going to be carrying that out? Okay.

Before the Vice President does that, let me just say how proud I am of all of you. This is an extraordinary collection of talent, and you inspire great confidence in me. I think the more the American people get to know you, the more you will inspire great confidence in the

American people. All of you have made extraordinary sacrifices to be here. Many of you have brought your families here; they're making extraordinary sacrifices.

But what a moment we're in. What an opportunity we have to change this country. And for those of us who have been in public life before, these kinds of moments come around just every so often. The American people are really counting on us now. Let's make sure we take advantage of it. I know you will. So thank you for your commitment.

Joe, do you want to administer the oath?

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:18 p.m. in the Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General-designate Eric H. Holder, Jr.; White House Counsel Gregory B. Craig; and White House Staff Secretary Lisa Brown. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Joe Biden. The related Executive orders and memorandum are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on a Meeting on the Situation in Iraq January 21, 2009

This afternoon I met with our Ambassador to Iraq, the commander in Iraq, and the overall theater commander in the region in order to get a full update on the situation in Iraq. Key members of my Cabinet and senior national security officials also participated in this meeting.

The meeting was productive, and I very much appreciated receiving assessments from these experienced and dedicated individuals. During the discussion, I asked the military leadership to engage in additional planning

necessary to execute a responsible military drawdown from Iraq.

In the coming days and weeks, I will also visit the Department of Defense to consult with the Joint Chiefs on these issues, and we will undertake a full review of the situation in Afghanistan in order to develop a comprehensive policy for the entire region.

NOTE: The statement referred to Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Forces—Iraq; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Retired Military Officers January 22, 2009

*The President.* This first Executive order that we are signing: “By the authority vested in

me as President of the—President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of

America, in order to effect the appropriate disposition of individuals currently detained by the Department of Defense at Guantanamo, and promptly to close the detention facility at Guantanamo, consistent with the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States and the interest of justice, I hereby order.”

And we then provide the process whereby Guantanamo will be closed no later than one year from now. We will be—is there a separate Executive order, Greg, with respect to how we’re going to dispose of the detainees? Is that—

*White House Counsel Gregory B. Craig.* We’re going to set up a process.

*The President.* We will be setting up a process whereby this is going to be taking place.

The individuals who are standing behind me represent flag officers who came to both Joe and myself and all the candidates and made a passionate plea that we restore the standards of due process and the core constitutional values that have made this country great, even in the midst of war, even in dealing with terrorism. They’ve made an extraordinary impression on me. They are outstanding Americans who have fought and defended this country. And for them to fight on behalf of our constitutional ideals and values, I think, is exceptional, so I wanted to make sure that they were here to witness the signing of this Executive order.

[At this point, the President signed Executive Order 13492, *Review and Disposition of Individuals Detained at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and Closure of Detention Facilities.*]

*The President.* There we go.

*White House staff member.* Thank you everybody—

*Vice President Joe Biden.* We got one more.

*The President.* There are three of these.

*Vice President Biden.* Several more. [Laughter]

*The President.* This one: “By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, in order to improve the effectiveness of human intelligence gathering and to promote the safe, lawful and humane treatment of individuals in United

States custody and of United States personnel who are detained in armed conflicts, and to ensure compliance with the treaty obligations of the United States, including the Geneva Convention, and to take care that the laws of the United States are faithfully executed”—I issue this following Executive order that effectively ensures that anybody detained by the United States for now is going to be—any interrogations taking place are going to have to abide by the Army Field Manual. We believe that the Army Field Manual reflects the best judgment of our military, that we can abide by a rule that says we don’t torture, but that we can still effectively obtain the intelligence that we need.

This is me following through on not just a commitment I made during the campaign, but I think a—an understanding that dates back to our Founding Fathers, that we are willing to observe core standards of conduct, not just when it’s easy but also when it’s hard.

And so, with that, let me sign the next Executive order.

[The President signed Executive Order 13491, *Ensuring Lawful Interrogations.*]

*The President.* There you go.

Two more; I got two more.

What we’re doing here is to set up a Special Interagency Task Force on Detainee Disposition. It’s going to be made up of the Attorney General, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Secretary of Homeland Security, Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the CIA, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and any other officers that we may need.

They are going to provide me with information in terms of how we are able to deal in the disposition of some of the detainees that may be currently in Guantanamo that we cannot transfer to other countries, who could pose a serious danger to the United States, but we cannot try because of various problems related to evidence in a Article III court.

So this task force is going to provide us with a series of recommendations on that. Is that correct, Greg?

*White House Counsel Craig.* That’s right, and detainee policy going forward.

*The President.* And detainee policy going forward, so that we don't find ourselves in these kinds of situations in the future.

*White House Counsel Craig.* And give clear guidance to the military——

*The President.* And that we are providing clear guidance to our military in terms of how to deal with it. Okay.

[*The President signed Executive Order 13493, Review of Detention Policy Options.*]

*The President.* There we go.

And finally, this is a much more specific issue related to the current detention of Ali Saleh Kahlah al-Marri. Some of you are familiar with the al-Marri case. You have a legal resident who has been detained. He is clearly a dangerous individual. His case is currently before the Supreme Court. We have asked for a delay in dealing—going before the Supreme Court and dealing with this case so that we can properly review the evidence against him and the various policies that have been presented up until this time. So:

[*The President signed a memorandum on Review of the Detention of Ali Saleh Kahlah al-Marri.*]

## Remarks at the State Department January 22, 2009

Thank you so much. It is my privilege to come here and to pay tribute to all of you, the talented men and women of the State Department. I've given you an early gift, Hillary Clinton. You—[*applause*].

In her you will have a Secretary of State who has my full confidence, and I want to thank Chairman Kerry and the Senate for acting swiftly to confirm her, because we have no time to lose.

My appearance today, as has been noted, underscores my commitment to the importance of diplomacy and renewing American leadership, and it gives me an opportunity to thank you for the services that you perform ev-

*The President.* All right, with those three Executive orders and this memorandum, the message that we are sending around the world is that the United States intends to prosecute the ongoing struggle against violence and terrorism, and we are going to do so vigilantly, we are going to do so effectively, and we are going to do so in a manner that is consistent with our values and our ideals. And all of the individuals who are standing behind me, as well as, I think, the American people, understand that we are not, as I said in the Inauguration, going to continue with a false choice between our safety and our ideals. We think that it is precisely our ideals that give us the strength and the moral high ground to be able to effectively deal with the unthinking violence that you see emanating from terrorist organizations around the world.

We intend to win this fight. We're going to win it on our terms.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to suspected Al Qaida operative Ali Saleh Kahlah al-Marri, currently in U.S. military custody as an enemy combatant. The related Executive orders and memorandum are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

ery single day. Sometimes I think the American public doesn't fully understand the sacrifices that you and your families make, the dedication that is involved in you carrying on your tasks day in, day out. And I know I speak for Joe Biden, as well as everybody else on this stage, when we tell you that we are proud of you.

You are carrying on a vital task in the safety and security of the American people. And part of what we want to do is to make sure that everybody understands that the State Department is going to be absolutely critical to our success in the years to come. And you individually are going to be critical to our success in